

Sweet Disposition by orphan_account

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Abandoned Work - Unfinished and Discontinued, Characters will be tagged, F/M, Gen, IT'S DEAAAAAAAAD! (oh my god), Not so mileven-centric, Other Additional Tags to Be Added, Other Ships Not Mentioned in Tags (not sure), discontinued, typical stranger things tags

Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Martin Brenner, Max Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Sam Owens (Stranger Things), Will Byers

Relationships: Eleven & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Will Byers & Eleven & Dustin Henderson & Lucas Sinclair & Mike Wheeler & Max Mayfield

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-11-11

Updated: 2017-12-04

Packaged: 2022-04-03 05:09:35

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 9

Words: 13,562

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Running, running, running. That's all what you and Hop have been doing since he took you in.

..But only this time, you didn't run.

Or

Wherein Eleven wasn't from the Lab in Hawkins and Hopper was a big city cop who found her and learned all about the government experimentations.

*****ON HIATUS*****

1. Hawkins, Indiana

Notes for the Chapter:

ok, so my first stranger things fic! im actually excited as all hell to be posting this because ive been writing about it nonstop and probably already planned a rough timeline for it.

this fic is gonna be more el and hopper-centric, mind you. dont worry i absolutely love and cherish mileven and there will still be mileven here.

anyways, enjoy the first!

Won't stop til it's over // Won't stop to surrender

ELEVEN

“Where next, Hop?” You look up at the man, his face is tight and his eyes dark. It was time to move again. You’ve been moving for so long you can hardly remember the places you’ve lived in.

“I know a little town in Indiana, don’t you worry. I’ve got an old friend there who can help.” Hop replies, leaning against the car and lighting his cigarette. ‘Cancer stick’ he called it. You knew cancer was bad so why did he use them? You remember Sara...

“In-di-a-na?” You say slowly.

Hop removes the cigarette from his mouth and exhales before talking,

“It’s gonna be a long trip so you’re gonna have to get comfortable in the car.” Comfortable? But you don’t like the car.. It’s tight and doesn’t have a lot of space. Especially when all the stuff is in the back. You don’t like tight spaces.. Not after the Room.

But maybe.. “Can I have the map?” You ask with wide eyes. The ones that you know Hop *can’t* resist. Hop laughs a bit.

“Yeah. Sure. Why not?” It’s quiet until he finishes his cigarette. You don’t think of anything else to ask. Hop turns away, not waiting for another word. You immediately go to other side of the car.

It’s always like that. He tells you where you’re gonna go next, lights a cigarette then you ask questions and you go once he finishes the cigarette. When he finishes, you go. No more questions. One of his rules.

You’re good at reading maps, Hopper taught you whenever he was too tired to read it on his own. But once you see where you have to go, you think: *That’s far away*.. You’ve only traveled from state to state but this was really far.

The trip takes a few days. You have to stop to eat and rest and then you buy things again. Stop, eat, rest and buy. Stop, eat, rest and buy.

You always hope that this is the last trip you’ll ever make. Hop says that it’s “Inevitable, it means that it can’t be stop.” You don’t like that word.

During the trip, Hop tells you again and again: “Don’t use your powers, okay? Especially because Hawkins is a quiet town, if any word gets out that some psychic girl suddenly shows up. That’s going on the news and everywhere else. And we both know what that means.” It means running again. Then he makes you say the rules out loud and you promise to not use your powers.

You arrive by night, Hop parked in front of a house in the woods. *It’s dark and scary*, you thought. You get out of the car, staying close to Hop. You see two other cars parked near the house, two you have never seen before. There are lights coming from the windows of the house. It doesn’t look empty at all.

Hop knocks on the door three times, it opens quickly and you see a woman almost as tall as you but she’s clearly older. Her tired face immediately turns into a happy one.

“Hopper! I was wondering when you’d come, I was worried!” The woman hugs him and you step back, surprised that Hop would let anyone but *you* hug him.

“Don’t know if you’ve noticed, Joyce. But a trip from Montana to Indiana isn’t exactly short.” Hop snorts, grinning. He gives her a one-arm hug. You watch at the contact they make. Hop said “Old friend”. They were close.

Joyce pulls back and notices you, “Oh dear, you must be El! Hop told me that you love Eggos. So I heated some up. Come in!”

You perk at the mention of Eggos, all you’ve eaten recently is take-

out food and snacks. You eat what's given to you. Another of his rules. Sometimes he lets you pick what you want to eat. But he's strict for that too.

Hop pushes you inside, you enter the house. It's bright and cozy-looking. The best house you've ever seen. It looks.. like a house.

"You're still not with Lonnie, are you?" Hopper frowns, picking up a big glass bottle from the couch near the door. Who is Lonnie? Was he bad? Whoever this 'Lonnie' is, you keep quiet about him. Hop said to have manners.

Joyce laughs, "Dear god, no. I just thought that you'd want a drink, considering all this traveling you did."

Drink? You frown, you hate it when Hop drinks. It means that he can't protect or care for you. He looks down at you, almost like he's reading your mind then he shakes his head at Joyce.

"Alright then, well the Eggos are in the kitchen. I'll see if El can sleep in Will's room. The poor boy's tuckered out from school, he also wanted to stay up to meet both of you but you came at a late time. I have to admit, I was really worried!" Joyce continues talking. It makes your head dizzy when people talk too fast and too much.

You look around the house while Joyce and Hopper talk. There are a lot of things around, messy. You think it's a good house but it smells like smoke. The smoke that comes from cigarettes like Hop's.

“Well, let’s eat then, how’s that sound?” Hop messes up your curly hair with his big hand before walking to the kitchen. You follow him while Joyce disappears into the hallway.

You sit at the small dining table while Hopper gets the Eggos and puts them on your plate. While he’s getting water, you ask. “We will run again?”

“*Will* we run again?’ To answer, no, kid. Hopefully not.” Hop puts a glass of water in front of you. “That’s why I told you to not use your powers here, remember? But this isn’t where we’re going to live, this is temporary. There’s a little cabin in the woods here, I’m gonna take you there when everything else is sorted out. You’ll see our new home. Yeah?” He talks slowly, when it’s Hop, you’re okay with him talking but he still slows it down for you to understand.

You blink. Temporary.. Means not forever? You think for a bit before stabbing an Eggo with a fork. It’s not that hot, you could eat with your hands. But Hop reminded you of eating manners. “Always use a spoon, fork, knife or spork, even.” You asked him what a spork was. He said it was a com-bi-na-tion of a spoon and fork. He showed you one.

“Okay, yeah.” You reply, biting into the waffle while Hop watches you.

Hopper sighs, eating his waffles too. “I’m really trying, kid. Okay? I know you’re tired. I am too.” You don’t say anything. “We can’t blow it here. Hawkins is a good town.”

“Blow it?”

Hop leans forward, his face is grumpy. “Blow it. Meaning to like, mess up. To not do things right.” Oh. Okay.

“Okay.” You repeat, not wanting to talk anymore.

Notes for the Chapter:

also i posted this on 11.11.17 11:11 PM. im a sap.

thanks to everyone who reads this! good morning/
noon/evening to all of you wherever you are.
if you appreciate this enough or have some criticism,
dont be afraid to comment down below.

2. Meeting The Kids

Notes for the Chapter:

bork

“Eleven. What you did today was not good.” Papa says, his eyes staring at you. You did bad. You didn’t do what he said. “I told you to listen. You disobeyed me.”

“Papa.. He was.. Bad.” You try to say. Papa shakes his head, frowning.

“You should not have been scared, Eleven. He is bad, that’s why you need to listen to him. We need to know what they’re planning.” His voice is hard. You know what that voice means. badelevenbadeleven

You bring your knees closer to you, scared, “Papa.. I-.”

He stands up, turning away from you. “Not anymore. You’re going to the Room. No food or water. I told you to do what I said, Eleven. You need to know the consequences for your actions.” nonononono

“Papa!” You cry out as the men come in and they grab your arms. ithurtsithurtsithurts

Then dark..

ELEVEN

Morning is always a dis-ap-poin-ting thing. For you, it meant that you were leaving or staying. It was almost always leaving. But not this time, this time you wake up on a bed that’s not yours and everything

felt alright, somehow.

You sit up straight, throwing off the blanket that was on you. Where are you?

“Hop?” You call out, wondering if this was still Joyce’s house.

Hop? You call out to him again in your thoughts and after a few seconds, Hopper opens the door, seeing him always gave you comfort.

“Well, good morning, kid. Was just on my way to wake you up but it seems like you did that yourself.” He leans against the door. “In case you’re wondering; no, we’re not leaving yet and this is Jonathan’s room you’re in.” He says slowly.

“Jo-na-than?” Saying the name feels weird. Hop’s lips curl up slightly.

“Yeah, Jonathan. Joyce’s eldest.” Hop gestures for you to follow him and you get off the bed. Before you follow Hop, you look around the room. There are a few posters. It’s not too bad.

You sneak a look outside through the window. The sun is bright. Outside didn’t look so dark and scary now.

“Kid.” Hop says again and you follow him. You exit the room and

walk into the hallway but the room was at the start of the hallway so you didn't walk far. You look back and see two more doors down the hallway.

You follow Hop into the kitchen again and this time it smells great. There was a tall guy maybe as tall as Hop at the stove. He was cooking a bunch of eggs and toasting a bunch of bread. It smelled really great.

Joyce appears from the living room, looking around in a panic. "Has *anyone* seen my keys?!"

"Check in the couch!" The tall guy you assume is "Jonathan" shouts, not looking at Joyce. It looked like this happened all the time. You know that you promised to not use your powers but Joyce needs help. This is only simple for you.

"Find." You whisper to Hop, he raises an eyebrow. Then he seems to realize what you're talking about.

"No, kid, wait-" You don't let Hop finish. You've done this a lot. It's easy. Keys are small and easy to find in your mind. You close your eyes.

You wake up in the 'void' again. Hopper called it the 'void' because you said it was dark so you also called it the void. You see a couch in front of you. You walk towards it, keeping your concentration. The dark water under your feet makes little splashes when you take each step.

The couch doesn't turn into smoke when you touch it. You recognize it as the couch from last night. Where the glass bottle was. The keys were there? But Joyce already checked.. Then you're back in the real world, Hop's looking at you with that angry look in his eyes. It's not fair that he gets angry with you for helping Joyce.

"There. Again." You say loudly, pointing at the couch. Joyce walks to it, lifting up the cushions. She sighs a sigh of relief and holds up the keys.

"Wonder how you knew that, huh?" Joyce smiles at you and she walks to kiss Jonathan on the cheek but then her smile fades away. "Bye, honey, and for god's sake please wake Will up. I know it's not a school day but he still has to wake up. Karen told me that they had something planned at their house, alright?"

"Okay, okay, mom. I'll wake him up and drive him over to the Wheelers' after breakfast."

"Maybe El would also like to join them. She should meet the kids here, they're wonderful." Joyce looks at you then to Hopper. You look up at Hopper as well. He frowns. Then Joyce looks back to you, alarmed. "Oh, honey. Your nose is bleeding, there's some ice in the fridge, Jonath-"

"It's alright, Joyce. She'll handle it. Let's get you to your car." Hop interrupts her then he walks out the door. Joyce follows him outside. And you're left alone with Jonathan.

You never needed ice for your nosebleeds. It's just a small thing. You wipe your nose with the sleeve of Hop's flannel that you're wearing.

"Hey, uh, El, right?" Jonathan asks when he puts the eggs he finished cooking on the table. "You don't mind if I ask you to wake Will up?"

"You don't mind?" You repeat, confused.

Jonathan looks at you, "Uh, it's like asking if it's okay for the other person to do something, the other person being you. Something like that."

"Oh, it's okay." You smile.

Jonathan smiles too, "Cool, Will's room is at the end of the hall. Make sure to knock before opening the door. Common courtesy, you know?" Cool..

You nod, "I know." Then you go back to the hallway, repeating what Jonathan said to you. "End of hall. Knock. Open. Wake Will up." There's a door at the end of the hallway. You knock three times like Hop taught you and you open the door.

A boy is sitting at the table that's against the wall. He looks like he's doing something. "W-Will?" You call out. The boy turns around quickly, there's a kind of look in his eyes. His eyes are big but he looks so small.

“Who are you?” Will asks.

“I’m El, Jonathan asked me to wake you.. But..” You move your feet quietly. “You’re already awake.”

“Oh, yeah.. Yeah. Tell Jonathan I’ll be out in a minute.” The boy says then he turns away from you. You stay around for a few seconds, looking around the room. There are a papers and toys lying around. You only have a stuffed bear as a toy. Hop gave it to you, it was for your twelfth birthday which was a couple of weeks ago.. You got to pick when your birthday was because both of you didn’t know. But Hop found out that you were only ten when he found you because of the document things.

Jonathan’s sitting at the table when you come back. “Will said that he will be out in a minute.” You say carefully. Jonathan sighs.

“Start eating then get ready. Hopper went out in town; he let you go to the Wheelers’ today. I’ll be back in a second.” Jonathan stands up and walks to maybe Will’s room. You’re alone.

You do as you’re told and eat the eggs and toast on your plate. You always eat what you’re given. You just stare at your surroundings, the house is better in the day. It looks less scary. Then suddenly Will comes running out the hallway with a backpack. He sits at the table, quickly eating his food. You watch him with wide eyes as he wolfs down the food. Wolfs meaning to eat really fast.. Hop also taught you that.

“Geez, buddy. You don’t need to hurry up. Look at El, she’s just casually eating. And I think you’re scaring her.” Jonathan sits back at the table.

“Not scared.” You mutter, eating faster. Jonathan said you also had to get ready. Will doesn’t say anything.

You finish first, you are used to finishing first. Hop taught you to eat quick if it was needed. Especially if you were running again. But you remind yourself that you’re not running. You realize that Hop’s not here too. But it’s alright. You can deal without him. You would only be at the “Wheelers”.. *Wheelers*’?

You find your bag by the door, you bring it into Jonathan’s room and change out of your t-shirt, jeans and Hop’s flannel. You could wear a t-shirt but you need to wear something over it to cover your wrist so you could hide your tattoo. Unless you use the bandana Hop gave you but you don’t like it.

“Nice.” Jonathan says to you when you walk to his car outside. You smile, looking down at your long-sleeves t-shirt and overalls. You like overalls.

Will sits in the front and you in the back. You don’t mind.

“Who are the ‘Wheelers’?” You ask once Jonathan starts driving. Will turns around instead.

“It’s Mike’s family. Mike Wheeler. Lucas, Dustin and I always hang out there, especially in his basement.” He says. He talks fast too..

All these new names confuse you, “Mike? Lucas? Dustin?” Will gives you a small smile.

“You’ll see them. They’re great.”

You don’t ask anymore, instead you look outside the window. Your first view of Hawkins. It isn’t like the other towns or cities you’ve been to, it looks like a quiet town. Like Hop said. Speaking of Hop, you drive past a familiar car parked at a building. You don’t know the name of the building for sure but you read, ‘POLICE’

Will kept messing with the radio during the drive, trying to find a song. You do that too sometimes.

After a while of driving, Jonathan finally stops. You press your face against the window to see the house properly. It’s large. You’re going in there?

“This is it, El.” Will says and gets out of the car.

“You guys have fun, alright? And only stay in the house. I don’t want Hopper bearing down on me.” Jonathan looks at you, smiling. You also get out of the car. You watch as he drives away.

“How long?” You ask Will when you catch up to him.

He looks at you, “Huh?” You forget that people aren’t used to you talking with “broken sentences”. Hop called it that, still, he understands what you’re saying most of the time.

“How long are we going to be here?” You say for him to understand.

“Oh, just until night. Don’t worry,” Will gives you another small smile, like the one in the car. “Hey, uh, sorry for being kind of rude to you back at the house. I just don’t like.. Strangers going into my room..”

You think about this and find yourself agreeing with him. “It’s okay. I don’t like that too.”

Will leads the way to the door, he rings the doorbell a few times before a tall woman with curly long hair answers the door. She’s pretty. “Hello, Will! Oh, who’s this?” She smiles then looks at you, still smiling.

“She’s my.. Uh, cousin. Yeah.” Will says. Cousin? He looks at you like you’re supposed to say something. Are you?

You meet the lady’s eyes. “My name is El, Will’s cousin.” You say, shifting your feet quietly.

“Nice to meet you, El. Come in, kids!” The lady leaves the door. You follow Will inside. It’s a large house, larger than Joyce’s. You saw that from the outside.

There’s another man there sitting in an armchair. He had glasses and short hair. “Mike’s friends?” He asks.

“Yes, Ted. They’re going to do their Science fair project downstairs.” The pretty lady replies.

“Tell them to not make any trouble.”

“Hey, El. Here.” Will calls for your attention, you go to him.

“Who is the lady and the man?” You whisper.

“Oh, them? That’s Mrs. Wheeler and Mr. Wheeler. Mike’s parents. He has two sisters but I guess they’re upstairs. Come on, we’re going *downstairs*.” He turns away and sure enough, goes down the stairs.

Downstairs? But this was already downstairs.. Was there a downstairs to the downstairs? You wonder, but you don’t ask any more questions.

Downstairs looked dark but the right kind of dark, it looked like the right kind of bright too. There were three more boys sitting at a table, talking out loud. They looked very different from Will. You wouldn’t have a hard time recognizing them.

“Oh my god, Dustin. No one cares about your dumb choice for candy, okay?” The dark-skinned boy says, gesturing wildly with his hands. The long and curly-haired boy with a hat seemed offended.

“Excuse me, Three Musketeers is more than nougat. It is pure delight, fuck you, Lucas!” He yells.

“Guys, quiet down! My mom might hear you! And- Oh, hey, Will!” The dark-haired boy hisses then he sees you and Will. “Will and um, company.”

“Hey, guys!” Will greets them, you just decide to stand beside him, not knowing what to do.

“Will, who is that?” Lucas asks, pointing at you. You could say the same for them.

“Oh my fucking god, is that a girl? You brought a girl down here?” The boy with the hat almost-shouts. You step back, what was wrong with a girl being down here?

“Shut up, Dustin!” The dark-haired boy punches the other and he stands up, “Hey, I’m, uh, Mike. What’s your name?”

“El.” You flatly reply, looking at Will if he was going to say anything.

Will steps forward, “She’s my cousin, she’s staying over for a bit. My mom asked me if I could bring her along.”

“Does your mom even have siblings?” Dustin tips his head. Lucas sighs and Mike glares at Dustin.

“Whatever, let’s just discuss what we’re doing for the fair, okay? Let’s get back that first place streak.” Lucas says before anyone else talked.

“Okay. Hey, El, come on. You can sit with me.” Will pulls your arm and you both sit at the table. Mike went and got another chair, he was on your left while Will was on your right.

They all seemed friendly, Mike, especially. You think you like Mike.

“Dude, we can’t do that shitty aerodynamics helicopter thing again. It was like boring as hell.” Dustin says.

“But we still got first!” Lucas replies. You look at Will and he looks at you, nodding. So, this was a regular thing. Dustin and Lucas fighting. Mike interrupts:

“Guys! Okay, we’re not just gonna do it. We have to think of something new. Any ideas?”

Will shrugs, “I mean, it’s something we haven’t done yet so what about electromagnetic waves?” Electromagnetic waves? You frown.

What were those?

“Uh, excuse me? We did a project about it before and it all turned to shit because *someone* couldn’t get the coils right!” Dustin motions to Lucas.

Mike stands up suddenly, you jump a bit in your seat. “Guys, seriously. Stop going for each other’s throats. We don’t have time for your stupid hate-love relationship right now!”

“I thought that we were just going to do some other random shit and play games!” Lucas replies.

“Well, we were!..” Mike falters. Lucas raises an eyebrow.

Mike sighs, “I mean, guys. My mom will literally get mad if we play my Atari. She’s already grounded me because we stayed up so late last time! And besides, the fair is like next month now and we always participate. We only lost first place last year because some other dudes made something better than ours. That’s why we have to make something better than theirs this time!”

“Mike, that was the most beautiful speech I’ve ever heard but sit the fuck down and let’s just think about other ideas. We know we have to reclaim our places as kings in the Science fair, we get it. Something about wanting to impress your dad and stuff.” Dustin replies. Mike looks like he’s about to say something until Will speaks up.

“Guys, calm down. We’re just going in circles!” Mike finally sits down and the table is quiet for a while.

“Dude, screw this. We are playing on your Atari and you can’t stop me.” Dustin says and leaves the table, looking around the room.

“What the hell are you looking for?” Lucas asks, confused.

“His Atari!” Lucas just sighs and face palms. Dustin looks around, “What?!”

“It’s in my room, and I can’t just sneak a game console down here without my mom seeing!” Mike says, he has a point. Whatever a game console was, it sounded big.

“Dude, this is so boring. Let’s just leave this place. Let’s go to the arcade or something.” Dustin turns to all of you.

You tense. Leave? But you couldn’t leave. You feel a hand on your shoulder. Will. Jonathan said that you should only stay in the house. You’d just stay here.

“Um, guys? El can’t leave the house. We promised her.. um.. Dad that we’d just stay here.” Will frowns, looking at the taller boys. They look to one another.

“No one will know! We’ll be in and out like ninjas.” Dustin replies.

“I don’t have my bike.” Will argues.

Lucas shrugs, “You can ride backseat on mine. No problems there.”

“Yeah, and El can ride back on mine. Right?” Mike turns to you, oh. Ride back on his bike? You don’t really know what that means. Will doesn’t talk, he’s thinking.

Dustin groans, throwing back his head. “Come on, Will! It’s just around town, it’s not like we’re going cross-country or some ridiculous shit like that. Do you want to stay here doing nothing?”

“Well, not really but-“

“Fine, that settles it then! Hey, this party’s a democracy, okay? Majority of us want to go outside. You and El can just leave and stay at your house watching movies or something but we’ll need to have some actual fun this weekend.” Dustin turns to exit through the door behind him.

Everyone else leaves and you’re left with Will.

“Go?” You ask him but you don’t really want to go.

He smiles at you but not a happy one. “Yeah, I guess so. That’s

Dustin, Mike and Lucas...” You follow him out, you look around the room one last time before closing the door behind you.

Notes for the Chapter:

thanks to anyone who reads. have a lovely morning/
noon/evening to yall!

if you appreciate this enough or have criticisms dont
be afraid to comment down below. (i think) i can
take it

3. Back in My Damn Hometown

Notes for the Chapter:

so. after all the research ive done about police stuff, i have not understood a damn thing. but here yall go

HOPPER

You leave the house after moving all of your stuff from the backseat to the living room. You tell Jonathan that you'll let El stay at the Wheelers'. You remember Karen and Ted, they're good. But you're still pissed about El using her powers just to find Joyce's keys. Did that kid just forget about everything you told her? Jesus Christ.

Anyways, time to get a new job. You're pretty sure that they'll let you apply for officer at the police station. You've been chief of police here and you've been a city cop for god's sakes. Your documents definitely exceed their requirements. Well, you're not sure after six years. The moving has been really stressful and crappy but El's a good kid.

Not a lot has changed in this town. Joyce still works at Melvald's, she's still not with Lonnie anymore. Thank god for that. The stores are still the same, except for the arcade thing you heard about from teenagers.

You enter the police station, you immediately recognize the front desk.

"Flo?"

“My, my. If it isn’t Jim Hopper.” Goddamn, Flo’s still working here?

“Holy shit, Hop! Back from the big city! We thought you’d never come back. This town missed its old chief.” Powell grins, showing off his Chief of Police badge.

“You got that from my underwear drawer, Cal?” You crack a smile, “Or you been sneaking around your *wife’s* drawer?”

Callahan laughs while Powell grins. “You still got it, Hop. Sadly, this is state-issued stuff. Why, you thinkin’ about takin’ it back?”

You shrug, “I don’t know but a job sounds nice though. Maybe starting out as a police officer again isn’t that bad.” The two cops look at each other.

“You’re staying?” Callahan asks.

“Sure, why not?”

“Damn, it’s been years, Hop. I’m not sure if the state’s gonna take you back all that clean.”

“I’ve been through two academies, I’m sure I know my field training.” You grit your teeth. Hawkins has been quiet and safe since you were

chief. Nothing major really happened and to admit it had been boring.

Powell interrupts Callahan before he could say anything else, "Let's call state for that, huh? Anyways, tell us what the hell you've been up to. C'mon, sit down!"

You stay a few more minutes at the station, exchanging stories with your old fellow policemen. You missed these guys and the care-free days you had when you were chief. Hell, you even miss the aggressive owls that attacked everyone for some damn reason.

Then you remember you still have to get to the cabin. It's near afternoon but you have a lot to do, especially planning, furniture and all that other senseless crap that bores the hell out of you. But you need to make a suitable home for El so you do it for her. Ever since Sara.. Well, you always thought that you needed someone to take care of you but it turns out vice versa.

You only really needed to take care of someone else, to do it right... To have another chance at being a father. Not that you've ever thought of being a father to El.

Well, maybe you've thought about it a few times. But adoption can't happen now, not while the government's still looking for her behind the scenes. Damn scientists, why couldn't they let her lead a normal life? A twelve year old isn't meant to track commies or to be tested on like some fucking lab rat. Just the mere thought of it angers you.

If Sara.. If your little princess had never passed, you wouldn't have

thought to explore El's backstory more when you first saw her in the city. Hell, you might never have seen Eleven.

But maybe just remembering Sara with her beautiful hair all gone, her adorable clothes replaced with a hospital gown and her looking weak and fragile.. It just clicked something inside you and you were determined to help this little psychic girl you'd seen being chased by vans and soldiers. People had thought she had escaped from some loony bin or orphanage downtown but you knew better. You fucking knew better, how important could a kid be if they were being chased by the fucking military? People are goddamn blind.

God.. Fucking Christ. You're in your car and you bang your head against the wheel. *What have you gotten yourself into?* You sigh and turn on the engine. You should check if your grandfather's cabin is still standing because if it isn't, you are fucked. And you don't like to be fucked because you still have El to worry about. Damn kid.

You back up and drive away from the station. Then you turn a corner and see a bunch of kids biking on the other side of the road. Huh, you remember your early days. You were a brat, ha.

The radio suddenly belts out a song you have near and dear to your heart, it's one of the songs you introduced El to. You tap your hands on the wheel to the beat, keeping your eyes on the road. You wouldn't be much use to El if you crashed into the ground. She'd always wake you up on the road, sweet kid. Hopefully, Hawkins is enough and you don't have to leave again. You're damn near exhausted and you're sure that El's exhausted too. She doesn't deserve this life.

You get to the cabin by lunch time. You've forgotten all the ways and

it took a while to get your bearings. It's still standing, just the way you left it. You went here for summers, your grandfather taught you how to hold a gun, how to hunt and basically how to survive in the woods. Then he left the cabin to you when he died. Great guy, huh?

The door is locked but luckily you still have the keys. You kept them in case of emergencies and you needed a place to lay low in. No one in Hawkins even knows this cabin exists out here in the woods; people don't stray far away from their houses.

It's full of dusty boxes and hunting equipment. All the animal trophies are still up, you're gonna have to get rid of those because you don't want El to be surrounded by creepy-ass animal heads. Yep, definitely getting rid of those. Also the hunting equipment. But maybe you should give those boxes a check, never know what's in them.

Oh well. You gotta get to work. Jesus.

Notes for the Chapter:

thanks to anyone who reads. have a lovely morning/
noon/evening to yall!

if you appreciate this enough or have criticisms dont
be afraid to comment down below.

also, pancakes.

4. Breaking a Promise

ELEVEN

There are three bikes outside, obviously belonging to the boys. You watch as Lucas and Dustin get on theirs, Will gets on the back of Lucas' bike. Oh. So that's what riding back means.

You look at Mike who's just sitting on his already, he's staring. "Hop on." He pats his seat. Oh no. No.

"Uh, n-nevermind. I'll just wait here until Jonathan comes." You say, panicked. You can't ride on that. You never have.

Mike leans back, "It's just around town, El."

"What is holding up, you two?!" You hear Dustin yell. You jump back, heart racing.

"I-" You stop. What could you tell Mike? That you've never ridden a bike before? Even in the back?.. Well it doesn't matter because he figures it out.

"You've never ridden a bike before, haven't you?" Mike 'furrows' his eyebrows kinda like Hop does when he's thinking. "Well.. That's alright. You don't have to pedal or anything.. You're just sitting behind me." Sitting behind him?

His voice sounds honest and kind.. You stand still for a moment, thinking. “Okay..” You walk over to him and he gets off, helping you sit down. The seat is high, then you realize because Mike had long legs and was definitely taller than you.

He holds you by the arm but it doesn’t hurt like the bad men did to you before. “It’s alright, see?” He smiles at you when you’re finally on the seat. You smile back and his face reddens for a moment and he looks away. *What was that?*

Mike sits on the bike and tells you to hold onto his jacket. You do as your told, then he starts pedaling.

“Finally, Jesus!” Dustin shoats, waving his hand, “Come on, Max’s gonna be there!”

During the ride, whenever the bike went too fast, you’d grip Mike’s jacket tighter, than you feel him slow down. He’s really kind. Slowly, you start to feel comfortable riding back. The wind would be a gentle breeze against your arms and you could see the quiet town of Hawkins pass by. You sigh, but it’s a good sigh. Hop never did this with you. He’d never take you in drives in the cities you were in. He always said you had to stay home.

Suddenly, you see a familiar car appear around a corner, driving towards your group. “Mike..” You say, trying to hide yourself by pressing against him.

“Huh? What is it?” He asks.

“My.. Dad. Hide.” You mumble loud enough for him to hear.

He’s silent for a while. “What- Oh. Oh shit. Hey, Lucas! Dustin! Cover us on the left!” Mike shouts for the two boys to hear. Lucas and Dustin look at each other then they slow down for Mike to catch up and to stay on the right side.

“Party member assisted. What’s wrong?” Dustin asks as the car drives by. Hop doesn’t seem to notice you. He actually looks kind of happy.

“Oh, that was.. That was Hopper, wasn’t it?” Will looks at you with wide eyes.

“Who the hell is Hopper?” Lucas asks.

“He’s El’s dad, right, El?” Mike says.

“Yes.” You answer then press your head against Mike’s back, thinking how close that was and how mad he could’ve been if he saw you outside.

“Nice one, Mike!” You hear Dustin shout, then he laughs. “*Nice one?*”

“Shut up, Dustin!” Mike shouts back, then the three other boys laugh. You can’t help but smile.

But you also can't help wondering where Hop's going.

...

Mike stops in front of a big colorful building. He gets off first then he helps you. Once you're off the bike, you're a little glad that your feet are on solid ground. Then suddenly a girl with bright, red, long and curly hair walks over to your group. "Hey, nerds!" She says, smiling. She's holding a long.. board with four wheels. What is that?

"Hey, Max." All the boys say at the same time. Then 'Max' looks at you, raising an eyebrow.

"Okay, who is she?" She nods her head at you.

"El." Will replies quickly.

"Will's cousin." Dustin adds.

Max frowns, "Wait, you have cousins?"

Will sighs, "I know right? Shocker. So are we going in or not?!"

Max turns around and walks away, “Okay! Geez, boys..” You hear her say. She seems rude but kind.

You watch the other boys look at each other then they move to follow Max. You look behind you, there's a bad feeling you have. You don't like it.

“El?’ Will suddenly appears in front of you, holding your *left* wrist. You pull your hand back even if his grip didn’t hurt. He notices your dis-com-fort and steps back. “Uh, sorry. I just kept calling you but you wouldn’t respond. Are you okay? If you want to go home, I’ll go with you!”

Do you want to go back home? What about Mike? Dustin? Lucas? Max? No. You don’t want to go back home. The bad feeling.. It’s here. Not back home.

“No, I’ll stay with you.” You say, giving Will a small smile and he smiles back.

“Great! Come on, let’s catch up with the guys.” He turns around and you walk beside him to the building. You read the sign above the doors. A-R-C-A-D-E.

It was noisy inside, full of weird high-pitched sounds. And there were also a lot of kids probably the same age as you. You try not to get bothered and just follow Will. You see the three boys surrounding Max at a.. An Arcade cabinet. You asked Will.

“Oh my god, oh my fucking god! Watch out!” Dustin jumps repeatedly.

Max’s response is to scream, “Shut up!”

“You are so dead.” Lucas comments.

“I thought you were supposed to be on my side, Sinclair.” Max looks at him quickly then turns back to the screen.

“Loyalties don’t last forever. I’m with Mike for Pac-Man.”

“Nice!” Mike says and they both high-five.

Will joins them, “Guys! What about Frogger? I’ve kept that score for like a week now!”

“Oh yeah, Frogger too.” Lucas smiles innocently.

“You can’t be a two-faced douchebag, Lucas!” Max yells, concentrated on her intense game. You wonder what it’s about and why it seems so important to her. Her face looks as red as her hair.

After a while, Max dies in the game and the group moves on to another game. You just watch them with interest, you’ve never

played or seen these games before but they look fun. Mike plays this maze-like game, he controls a yellow circle eating little dots and he tries not to touch the.. ghosts? In the game. Then you move over to Will who's playing 'Frogger', beating his high score.

Dustin and Lucas argue (again) about the last game they should play but Mike goes over to them and says something.

"What? Shit. You saw them?" Dustin looks around.. looking for something. Or someone?

The bad feeling becomes worse and the whole group becomes silent.

"Who? Troy?" Max asks.

"Oh fuck, we're screwed. He's right there! Come on, come on!" Dustin runs towards the exit with the group following them. You try to follow them as well but the kids playing at the game cabinets are blocking your way. *Oh no.*

You're pushed away by a taller boy. *Troy?* "Dude, come on. Those nerds went that way! Outside!" Three more boys follow him. This is the bad feeling. This is it. Crap. You squeeze past the other kids and reach the front door to see Will being held by Troy.

"Guys! Run!" Will whimpers as he tries to get out of Troy's grip. *No no no no.*

It hurts. Your arms. They hurt. They hold you too tight.

“Troy let him go!” Max almost-growls.

“But I finally caught a little tiny fairy! Didn’t I?” Troy holds Will tighter to him. They’re hurting Will.

Mike runs up to him but he’s pushed down by one of Troy’s guys. He crashes down onto the pavement, his hands scraping the rough surface. He’s kicked repeatedly until he curls up into an almost-ball.

“What? You’re not gonna help your friends, losers?” Troy snarls almost like an animal would.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck.” Dustin says, holding onto Lucas. Then Max marches forward, holding her skateboard. What can you do? What can you *do*?

“Get a load of this, assholes!” She smacks the board at the guy kicking Mike. He stumbles back, face red. The two other boys move forward and-

No. No more. You promised Hop but- *But they need your help.*

With the thought of it in your mind, you break Troy’s arm, he lets go of Will. You shove back the two other boys, pushing them against the ground. “Fuck!” Troy screams, then he looks behind him for a split second and he sees you. There’s fear in his eyes.

You wipe your nose quickly and repeatedly so the boys don't see the blood. Then you go to Will. "Are you okay?" You ask him, holding his arms.

"El? What-" You shake your head. Will stops talking.

"Mike? Fuck, dude! Your hands are shit!" Dustin and Lucas go to Mike.

"Crap.. Mike." Will stands up slowly, you help him up and you walk to Mike. His hands were scraped and scratched. You acted too late.

Then you see Troy walking towards you, holding his broken arm. "You punks are dead! Fucking dead, you hear me?!"

You pull on Will's shirt. "Will. We need to go." He looks at you then nods.

"Guys, let's go back to the house." He says, then he adjusts the seat on Mike's bike and sits down. You sit behind him. Mike sat on the back of Lucas' bike. Will pedals away first; you look back as Dustin, Lucas and Max follow behind. You can't help but look at Mike guiltily.

You had the power to stop it from happening.. You had.

Mike's house is a comforting sight and you're glad to be inside. You open the door so Dustin and Lucas could carry Mike inside. Max goes inside last, making sure you weren't followed then she closes the door. "His hands don't look too bad.." Max observes.

"We still need to clean it!" Dustin replies.

"There's a.." Mike groans in pain, "There's a kit in my room."

"I'll go get it!" Will says, going up the stairs.

You just watch as they fuss over Mike. Kinda like Hopper does when you do something unexpected and dangerous but Hop gets mad at you after. But they don't get mad at Mike, they're just worried. You just sit on the seat you were on earlier and sigh, covering your eyes with your palms.

"Hey?" Max approaches you and you look up. "Uh. That was really weird, right? Suddenly Troy just breaks his arm and screams like a little girl. What a coward."

You manage a smile, "You hit a guy in the face with your skateboard.." Max laughs, looking at the board. It had a crack.

Then she smiles at you, "Yeah, gotta man up, you know? Those boys can't take care of themselves." Then she puts out her hand, "I just realized that I haven't introduced myself properly. How rude, right? Max Mayfield. The only girl in the nerdy boy party."

You shake it, “El.. Hopper.”

“So, Will’s cousin, huh?” Before you can reply, Will runs down the stairs, carrying a small bag with a red cross on it. You go with Max to check on the boys.

“Douse it with alcohol, like right now!”

“Dude, no! What the fuck?!”

Mike shouts in pain, trying to pull his hands back. “I will fucking kill you, Dustin!”

Dustin then dabs at his hand with cotton, “You’re gonna be grateful someday, Mike!”

“Ugh, what the hell? How do you wrap this thing?” Lucas fumbles with the gauze bandages. You remember Hop teaching you how to wrap a bandage properly, that was when he’d been cut with a knife while he was cooking. Clumsy Hop.

“I can do it.” You say, pushing Lucas away gently and taking the gauze bandages. The boys let you work quietly, you look at Mike from time to time to see if he’s reacting to anything but he just seems to be frozen there. But you notice when you’re wrapping his right hand, his stare seems to be fixed on your tattoo on your left wrist, the

sleeve wasn't covering it anymore. You quickly pull the sleeve over it and tighten the wrapping on his hand. "Tape." You look at Will and he hands you the roll. "Hold it still." Lucas holds the bandages in place while you tear off a piece of tape and you secure both his hands.

Max whistles, "I'll be damned. Nice handiwork, El." She pats your shoulder and all the boys sigh in relief as you're done.

Mike meets your eyes and for a moment, you're scared that he'd bring up the tattoo, instead he whispers, "Thanks." Then he turns away.

"Guys, Mrs. Wheeler told us to eat lunch. She's got food ready." Will says.

"What the hell are we going to say about him?" Dustin points to Mike's hands.

"I already told her that he was just scratched."

"Food sounds good." Lucas shrugs, standing up. Mike also tries to stand up with Will's help but he winces and falls down.

Dustin slaps a hand to his forehead, "Fuck. The bruises, that guy kicked him. What the hell about that?!"

“Let’s just not tell Mrs. Wheeler.” Max raises an eyebrow, “What’s wrong with that?”

“This son of a bitch is limping, look at him. Wait- Screw that! He can’t even stand up!”

“Okay, so what do we tell her? That her son got into a horrible accident?” Lucas looks around as if he’s trying to find a reason.

You think then say, “Can’t we just tell her that we want to eat down here? Tell her we’re busy doing the project.” You look at Max, “Max can’t go up there because she didn’t come through the front door. She’ll know that we’ve been somewhere or doing something other than Science fair.”

Dustin stares at you weirdly, “Holy shit, you’re a genius. And that’s like the most you’ve talked today.” You shrug.

“Okay. That sounds good.” Will says. Will, Dustin and Lucas go up to tell Mrs. Wheeler and to get the food. You also tell Dustin to get ice for Mike.

“Nice reasoning.” Max raises an eyebrow at you. You just sit beside Mike who’s closed his eyes. Resting. He’s leaning against the wall.

“Need to stay out of trouble. Dad will get mad.” You say and close your eyes too, listening to Mike’s steady breathing.

Notes for the Chapter:

hi yes hello thanks for reading. good morning/noon/
evening to yall! hope youre doing fine on this fine
day.

5. Found Out

HOPPER

“Hop. Come in, Hop.” Your walkie-talkie suddenly bursts to life as Powell’s voice comes through. You’re in the middle of looking through the boxes your grandfather had left you.

“What’s up?” You ask.

“There’s a report of a boy’s arm being broke. Thought you’d like to look into it.”

“Details?”

“Told me that his arm suddenly just broke while there were a few kids around. Two girls and four boys.” You freeze. No. It can’t be. Right?

“Two girls and four boys? Is there a description of them?”

“The first girl is Max.. Mayfield? There’s no name for the other girl but she was short and had short curly hair. The four boys were Mike Wheeler, Will Byers, Lucas Sinclair and Dustin Henderson.” *Fuck. Will Byers? Mike Wheeler?* You go out of the cabin, already having moved out all the animal trophies. You’re coated with dust.

"I'll come over. Over and out." You say before locking the cabin door and you run over to the car. Goddamn kid went out. You told Jonathan to tell her to stay at the Wheelers', only the Wheelers'. And this kid's arm breaking? *You swear to God.*

You drive as fast as you can to the station, thinking of how mad you're gonna be when you see the kid. She better have come back to the Byers' house or else you're gonna fucking *drag* her out there. "Ma'am.. Ma'am! Just please get the boy to the hospital for his arm to be fixed. We'll interrogate him when he's feeling better." Powell says, trying to calm down the hysterical lady.

"Woah, woah. What's going on?" You ask.

"These men won't listen to me! My son's arm was broken!" The lady howls furiously. Powell and Callahan step back as you assess the situation.

"Okay, let's back backtrack. What happened, kid?" You give the kid a hard stare. He gulps, his eyes full of fear.

"My friends and I.. We were just hanging out until Wheeler and his friends go over to us, then he pushes one of my friends to the ground."

"And this girl.. You said something about a girl?" You press, wanting more information in case this was really Eleven.

"I don't know. She was behind me, she-she must have broken my arm

somehow!”

“Describe. Her.” You grit out, not wanting anymore of this kid’s bullshit. He’s obviously lying.

“She.. She was shorter than me, had short curly hair. She was wearing a long-sleeved shirt with overalls on. But.. Her nose was bleeding.” Fuck. It’s her.

You turn around, storming away. “Hop! What the hell are we gonna do about this?” You hear Powell shout.

“You’re the Chief, Powell! You decide.” You yell then push the door open, getting in the car and driving to the Byers’.

Of course, the house is empty when you get there. Where the hell is Jonathan? You curse to yourself and go to the Wheelers’ next. Then you notice the bikes outside. You knock on the door and Karen answers. She looks at you before recognizing who you are. “Jim Hopper?” She gawks at you and you roll your eyes, putting on your tough face. It’s been a long time since you’ve seen each other but there’s no time for pleasantries right now.

“I’m here for El. Is she here?”

“Oh! She is. You’re a father again, Hop?” You almost wince at the term. *What?*

Fuck, those kids. "Oh, no. Uncle. El's uncle. Her father's not around." Karen looks down, clearly embarrassed by her mistake.

"Sorry." Karen apologizes, "Yes, anyway. They're downstairs, eating lunch. Come in! Come in!" Hmm, lunch. Shit, you haven't eaten yet. You're gonna have to grab a burger or something from Benny's.

You enter the house, it's just literally the same from when you last visited. Which was probably never but whatever. "Can I go down there?" You ask Karen, eyeing the basement door.

"Sure but I think they're busy down there." She replies.

If only you knew. You think before opening the door and going down the stairs. "El." You growl as you see her sitting at a small table, sure enough she's eating the food you saw on the dining table upstairs. But something doesn't feel right.

"Hopper." She stands up, meeting your gaze. Kid's got fire in her if she calls you 'Hopper'. The other kids stand up too, but not that dark-haired kid with the bandaged hands who's sitting on the floor. The hell is that about? You don't even think he's eating.

There's an awkward silence, then you grab Eleven by the wrist. Her *right* wrist, you make sure it's her right. "What the hell's wrong with him?" You mutter, glaring at the small girl in front of you.

“Troy and his guys hurt Mike. Will too. I. Helped.” She glares back at you. She knows that you know that used her powers. Damn. Well, it’s obvious since you wouldn’t storm over here if you didn’t know.

“Uh.. H-Hopper, sir.” The kid you assume is Mike stands up. He holds up his hands but you also can’t miss his wincing. What the hell happened to this kid? “El, um, she bandaged my hands because they got scraped bad when one of Troy’s guys pushed me down.” So, they don’t know. That fact makes you a bit relieved. You also notice El’s expression soften as Mike talks. Huh.

Those bandages are also on pretty good, you know that El remembers the shit you taught her back then. You can’t help but feel a little bit of pride, then you go back to being pissed. You decide to ignore Mike, you can deal with what he said later. You don’t have time for these kids right now.

“You should’ve stayed here. In fact, I should’ve never let you leave!” You shout at her, it hurts to see her flinch but she needs to know how much she fucked up on her first goddamn day!

“It’s our fault!” The curly-haired boy pipes up, “We forced her!” Then he elbows the black kid. He looks at you panicked.

“Uh, yeah!” You narrow your eyes at them, huffing. Then you look at Will Byers, who was supposed to *watch* her and to make sure that she’d stay *here*. The small boy doesn’t meet your eyes.

You turn your gaze back to El.

“We are going. Finish your lunch. Five minutes tops.” You announce and you almost feel the atmosphere in the room become.. sad. You keep a straight face, not saying anything else and you leave. You wait outside in the car. Then you see the door open and all the kids file out, save for the red-headed girl. Fucking hell, you can almost *hear* their sadness from here. They’re taking so long. What the fuck could they be talking about? You slam on the horn a few times. El turns to look at you as you roll down the car window. You motion for her to hurry up.

She waves to them and walks down to you.

“Time’s ticking, kid. Get in.” You rumble and lean back in your seat as she gets in the car, slamming the door shut too hard for your liking. “Hey! No tantrums, I swear to God.”

The drive back to the Byers’ house is quiet. El doesn’t say a word and you don’t either. The air feels like there’s a thunderstorm brewing. You stop in front of the house. Jonathan and Joyce’s cars aren’t there. The house almost looks abandoned.

Then El asks bitterly, “Are we leaving?” You tense, *are* you leaving? You still have the cabin, no one knows where that is. El wasn’t much of a giveaway.. But those boys.. You don’t think you can trust them.

“No, we’re not. But you’re grounded for the mean time. Kid, if you make any more trouble-“

“No! I won’t! I want to stay!” The kid looks at you, she’s doing that wide eyes thing. Hmm.

You grumble to yourself then toss the house keys to her. “Get our stuff. Don’t leave anything behind.” El gets out of the car and so you wait.

You turn on the radio just to fill in the silence. The cabin isn’t even ready to be lived in yet. What are you going to do? First damn day in Hawkins and the kid already breaks her promise. What’s just unfortunate about it is that the Troy guy saw her nose bleeding.

In the rearview mirror, you spot a van. **HAWKINS POWER AND LIGHT**. Weird, those never existed back then. There were never vans for power and light repairs. Is that new? Whatever it is, it looks suspicious as hell.

The van stops for a moment, you hold your breath. Then it drives away, over the horizon. What the fuck?

El comes out of the house with a bag in hand. Slowly but surely, she gets the bags into the back. So much for hoping to stay a few more days, you frown at the house. But you can’t risk involving Joyce’s family into this, they don’t deserve being terrorized by government assholes.

“Are.. you mad?” El asks softly once all the bags are in the back and she’s back in shotgun. You sigh, turning down the volume of the radio. You tap your fingers against the wheel. *Are* you really that mad? Or are you just worried sick?

“No. I’m not mad. I’m pissed, kid.” You furrow your eyebrows at her. “I just thought that you’d be fine for your first day here. I can ignore the ‘going-out-of-the-house’ stuff but using your powers?”

“My friends were in trouble.” She says firmly, holding her chin up as if daring you to defy her.

“You’re calling them your friends now? That’s cute.” You snort, not amused though.

“It’s true!” El shouts at you, “They are kind!” You frown, wondering if it was a mistake to let her go to the Wheelers’ to meet the other kids. Could you really trust any of them?

Maybe you just felt compelled to let her go because she’s been so... Lonely for all this time you’ve been travelling. She never has the chance to make friends, you tell her to stay indoors, to never show her face to the world because it would kill her to do so.

Christ, you didn’t expect this to be such a hard fucking situation.

“Whatever, kid. You’re grounded, understand? I mean it.” El nods at this. Good. You continue, “Right now, we’re gonna go to the cabin and you’re gonna help fix it up. You start driving away.

Another bout of awkward silence.

“So,” You start, “This Troy guy, you really broke his arm?” El looks at you and nods. Well. “You know his mom is like going batshit crazy over it. She doesn’t know who to blame.” El shrugs. Yeah, honestly, like that means anything to her.

“He was holding Will painfully.” El speaks up. You guess that’s an acceptable reason.

“About this Mike guy...” You trail off. “Do you like him?”

She tips her head slowly, “What?”

“I don’t know. You seemed off with him. Whatever. Don’t stay too close to him, alright? Boys like them are bad news but I can’t really stop you from hanging out with them since you’ve already damn attached yourself.”

El doesn’t reply and instead leans against the car window. You sigh and keep on driving. She doesn’t understand the concept of guy plus girl, you don’t really want to have the Talk with her either. And she’s just twelve for god’s sake! If you find out that any of those boys make a move on her, you’re fucking killing an asshole. You can’t have all this hormonal shit right now.

You also stop by Benny’s to pick up a burger and to buy fries for the both of you. You make small talk with Benny then get back on the road, making your way to the cabin. There’s still a five minute walk to it though, it’s in the middle of the woods. On the walk there, you

make sure El's the only one following you and damn sure enough, she is.

El stops beside you when you reach the cabin, you hear her take a sharp breath. "There?" She asks. You nod, thinking: *Yep, that's where we're gonna spend our days here, kid. Sleep tight!*

"Well, of course it's not done being cleaned out yet. But who's to know that you and I can't do a bang up job cleaning and furnishing the cabin?" You look down at her, putting your hands on your hips.

"Bang up job?"

"It means the successful completion of a job. Yeah?"

"Heck yeah." She smiles at you and you can't help but smile back. Damn kid. She makes it so damn hard for you to be.. Strict. You just completely forget the events of earlier to make this easier for you. You fuss up her curly hair, it's a long ways away from the buzz cut she had two years ago. She doesn't want it long so you cut it short to the best of your abilities. Despite this, you wonder what she'd look like with long hair.

Hopefully you'll get to see that in the future when all this is over.

"Let's get to work."

6. Jitters

MIKE

You and the guys watch as the car drives away, El told you that she'd be back. You hope she will be, she's cool and all but.. There's something you feel more sinister behind the works. How she looks skittish and jittery. Her clueless gaze as she observed your party. Something seemed wrong.

"So, what the hell are we gonna do now?" Dustin breaks the silence, "El's gone and you're fucked up, are we still doing the Science fair project?" You make an effort to shrug, even if it does hurt your whole body to do so. Argh.

Leaning against Lucas, you find out, really helps you to stand up. "Let's just go inside?" You suggest and they come to a unanimous agreement to finish the food first then figure out what to do. Welp, time to try and hide your limp and hands from your parents again. Thankfully, Nancy just stays upstairs, probably being every cliché teenage girl ever and calling her boyfriend, Steve Harrington. Some gross stuff.

You're first down the stairs, holding on to the railings delicately because your hands hurt like hell. You sit on the chair El was on earlier.

"So. El?" Max smirks at you. You immediately know what she's talking about.

"Um, no? Gross." You lamely reply, trying to avoid her pointed gaze.

“Oh come on, Mike. You were like so starstruck over her!” Lucas sits in front of you. “Dude, Mike. You cannot be liking this girl, it’s just the first time we’ve met her!”

“Guys, I don’t like her. Okay?” You roll your eyes. Everyone else’s glances at each other clearly say that they don’t believe you. Whatever. You really don’t, right? Then you look at your hands, remembering how close she got to you. Shit.

The guys and Max continue eating, you don’t really feel hungry after all those kicks you received earlier. You just listen to the others bicker, Lucas and Dustin especially. Eventually they finish eating and feel sleepy from having a full stomach.

“I’m gonna go now before my brother blows a fuse.” Max says before grabbing her skateboard and bailing out the door. She smiles at Lucas and Dustin’s attempt at saying goodbye but they’re too sleepy to say anything coherent. “Bye, nerds.”

Soon, you and Will are the only ones left awake while Lucas and Dustin are asleep in a pile somewhere on the ground. Will scoots on over closer to you, you raise an eyebrow. “I.. I honestly don’t know who El is..” He whispers to you, “She and Hopper just came last night.”

You gawk at him, “Really?” Will nods, eyes wide. You think back on the tattoo you saw on El’s wrist and the blood on her sleeve. Something definitely didn’t feel right now.

“I.. Know this might seem stupid and I’m an idiot for even thinking it but.. Do you think El has powers?” You almost regret asking it because it’s so ridiculous to assume that.

Will actually seems to think about this, frowning. “I.. I’m not really sure. But she acts weird.” Yeah, right. She *does* act weird.

“Honestly, I think that *she* somehow did all that to Troy and those other mouth-breathers. I’m not sure, of course. I mean, it couldn’t have been the wind that did that. Obviously.” Ugh, stop talking Mike! This is stupid!

Both of you sit in silence and you just sigh, your body’s aching- it’s probably going to bruise tomorrow and you’re gonna have to deal with it. You think your hands are gonna be fine, it’ll just hurt to touch things. But you’re a man and you can do it, you can resist a little pain.

“You should sleep upstairs, Mike. We’ll just leave early.” Will says, being the caring friend he is. Will’s probably the gentlest out of all of you. You think of a reason to say “No.” but the prospect of sleeping in bed seems pretty great right now, who would you be to say no?

“Help me up?” You ask him and despite Will’s small frame, he’s actually kind of strong. He acts as a support for you to lean on as you traverse the house and reach your room. “Thanks.” You take a look at him and you enter your room, closing the door behind you.

Saturday was supposed to be fun. This was only half-fun and it left you with a couple of bruises and scraped hands. But at least you got

to meet this new mysterious girl, right?

You close your eyes.

Notes for the Chapter:

chapt's short. i might stop my streak of updating every two days because the chapters are catching up to me.

anyways, have a great day wherever you are!

7. Keeping Caution

Notes for the Chapter:

aaaaaand im back. heya

WILL

It's been days since you last saw El at Mike's house. They'd just disappeared during that day, taking all of their stuff with them. You try not to think about it too much because you're jam-packed with work this week. School officially sucks.

But you do make sketches of her, at least, how you remember her. Curly hair, big brown eyes, and that sort of 'air' around her. Like what you'd feel before a storm. Tense.

You think back on what you and Mike had talked about during that weekend. It was ridiculous to think that El, a girl you don't even really know, had superpowers. It's a long shot. But then your dreams take you back to that day outside the arcade where Troy's arm suddenly broke. You saw El with that *look* in her eyes. Like she'd done something. You see that look in your mom's eyes every day when she tries to do something cool for you.

Sometimes you imagine her as having nosebleeds. It kinda fits with the drawings. It makes her look badass.

One day you come back home and she's there with Hopper and Jonathan. "El!" You don't realize how excited you are to see her when you do. She smiles at you then puts a finger to her lips. You look to Hopper and Jonathan talking in the kitchen. You sit down on the couch next to her. "Where have you been? We've been thinking

and worrying all about you!” You whisper but she shakes her head. It must weird some people out that she barely talks or seems awkward when she talks but you don’t mind it, it adds to that ‘air’.

“Grounded.” She whispers back to you after a while. Grounded? For what? Going out? You look at her, confused. How did Hopper even know she went out?

“How did-“ You start to ask but Hopper suddenly appears in front of both of you.

“Alright, here’s the deal. You can go out but you have to be with someone else. Preferably Jonathan there but Will can do to. You’re damn teenagers, you should know how to take care of yourselves.” Hopper grumbles, his eyebrows are always curving down and his jaw was set. He is really intimidating in the way that you can’t bring yourself to say anything.

El stands up and hugs him, Hopper lets out a soft “Oof.” and he pats her head. It’s strange to see them so close to together. Hopper was a giant compared to El. Suddenly the man looks at you with narrowed eyes and you steer your gaze elsewhere.

“Can we go out now?” She asks him, Hopper sighs.

“Not now, okay?” El looks at you dejectedly. You just shrug.

“I’m gonna change.” You declare, standing up and carrying your bag

with you. You go to Jonathan first, greeting him then you get to your room and change into a simple shirt and shorts. There's no meeting at the Mike's today so you can rest easy here at the house.

Knocking erupts at your door. Three soft knocks. "Come in!" You shout, knowing full well that it's El. She knocked like that when she first came in here, you noted. Her head pokes out of the doorway. "Hey, El."

"Hi." She goes in, leaving the door open and she sits on your bed. You don't feel nervous around her now like you did last time she was in here. El takes a good look around your room. It's a mess.

"Uh, look around if you want, I guess." You say, watching her as she goes to shelf beside your study table. It's full of all sorts of things. Then her attention snaps to a drawing you have on your desk. It's the drawing you made of her. You quickly hide it in your desk drawer, "Uh, that was just for a project."

"Me?" She points to herself, "In the drawing?" Ah, shoot.

You shrug, "Just.. You know.. I don't mean to be creepy or anything, I swear!" El touches your shoulder gently.

"It's okay. It's good. The drawing."

"Thanks.. You want to see it?" She nods. You gingerly take it out of the drawer and hand it to her. You can't help but feel embarrassed

and nervous.

She smiles as she takes the paper, “You are.. Very good at drawing.” Then suddenly she frowns and turns the paper to you. “Nosebleed?” You gulp.

“Uh, I just thought that it would make you look cool and badass if I drew it on you.” You stammer. El stays silent for a moment, her eyes seem focused and unfocused.

“Okay.”

You clear your throat, changing the topic. “Do you draw?”

El shakes her head, “No. I don’t have paper or pens or pencils. Hopper doesn’t buy me any.” Something about that doesn’t make you feel surprised for some reason. Why would it make sense?

“Oh, I can lend you some and we can draw together!” You take a few papers out of your supply and grab a pencil, then you hand it to her. She puts down the drawing and takes the papers and pencil. El smiles at you and you feel accomplished.

It turns out that she isn’t that great at drawing, but really, it doesn’t matter because you’re having a lot of fun just drawing with her. She draws flowers and rainbows while you draw characters from your D&D rounds with your party. El doesn’t quite understand who they are so you try your best to explain it to her, the whole time you’re

just thinking that Mike could've explained better since he's your Dungeon Master, but El insists that you explain it in your own words.

"So, uh. The way it goes in our party is that Mike's our paladin, Dustin's our bard, Lucas is our ranger and I'm the cleric." You say but El's expression just seems to become more and more confused. And you're running out of ways to explain this.

"Okay, I get it." She just says before you can say more and you're grateful for that. Thank God.

"Yeah.." You mutter and go back to drawing.

After a while, El pokes your shoulder and you look over to what she's drawn. It's you in stick figure form. You can't help but laugh, she looks hurt for a second but you draw her quickly, also in stick figure form. She giggles at it.

"Hey, guys. I made some toast if you want any!" Jonathan shouts from outside.

"No more Eggos?" El asks you. Eggos? You don't really know if you have any.

"I'm not sure. I can ask Jonathan if you want. I'll also get some toast for us." She considers this offer and nods before going back to her drawings. You stand up from your chair and leave the room. Thinking.

Should you take this opportunity to ask her about what happened at the Arcade? She seems to be in a good mood so maybe you should take it. It's just that if she really does have superpowers and just so happens to get mad at you.. Well, you're probably gonna have more than a broken arm and you'd prefer to keep all your bones intact, thank you. But.. You don't think she'd hurt you, if you take into account the Arcade events, she only hurt Troy and his goons because they were hurting you and Mike.

You grab a couple of toasts and put them on a plate. Your brother's fixing all his photos. "What are you doing?" You ask him while biting into a toast. Mmm, buttery and crispy.

Jonathan looks at you, surprised. "Oh, just arranging them. There's this photography contest in town, I just kind of wanted to participate."

"Good luck for that! I'm pretty sure you're gonna win, no one's gonna stand a chance against you." You smile at him. Your brother's a really good photographer, no questions asked. Sometimes he lets you rate them if he feels good enough about it. That's during your little breaks in the day when you'd visit his room, he'd play songs from his stereo and both of you would just rock the heck out. It's been a long time since you've had those breaks.

He lets out a chuckle and smiles down at his photos, "Yeah, we'll see." You take that as your cue to leave and you retreat back to the room. El's still drawing when you put the plate on the bed. She looks up and takes one, nibbling on it as she continues to draw on her paper.

You try to work up the courage to ask her and by that you mean you're just staring at her. She notices this and stares back at you. "What's wrong?" She asks.

"Uh," Crap. "Mike and I were talking about stuff. You.. Remember the Arcade right?" Of course she remembers the Arcade.

"Yes?"

"Well, when Troy broke his arm and the other guys got pushed down.. Shoot, I know it's stupid but.. Was that you?" El stops drawing, her shoulders tensing. You can see.

"Why?"

"You know what? Never mind. People can't have superpowers, it's just fiction." You turn away, sitting at your desk. What were you and Mike thinking anyway? The X-Men comics you read really have dug in your head.

I'm not supposed to tell. A sudden voice says in your mind and you lean back on your chair, startled. *But keep it a secret?* You look back at El and she's giving you a small mischievous smile and then she goes back to drawing. You just stare at her, not knowing what to do.

Holy crap.

Notes for the Chapter:

im gonna slow down a bit. schools a shithole! and
were jampacked with shit! its amazing!!!!

anyways, have a great day today wherever you are (:

8. Mad Max

“Sir, there’s something you need to hear.”

...

“When was this?”

“Only a few hours ago. Our lookouts also spotted this new car in town. One man, one girl.”

“Don’t engage, also, contact the others.”

“Okay, sir.”

“Keep an eye on that car. See where it goes and find out who the driver is.”

“Yes, sir.”

ELEVEN

Will Byers is someone you can trust, you feel. He’s the boy that tries to account for everyone’s wellbeing. The.. Cleric. That’s what he is in Dungeons and Dragons, the game he isn’t too good at explaining and the game you aren’t too good at understanding. You’ll leave the games to them.

He was kind about drawing even though you're bad at it and he's an expert. He says that it takes practice and patience. Then you decide that drawing isn't for you.

Hop lets you stay at the Byers' house but he's being extra *cautious* about it. You ask him many times if you can go with Will to the Mike's again but he says no, even if he said that he'll let you go. He doesn't trust you enough yet. Fine.

You just want to see your friends again. They're all fun to be with. You want to know more about Max, Lucas, Dustin and.. Mike. Mike. "What do you feel about him?" Hop asked once, you didn't answer that. You don't know why he's asking so many questions about Mike. There wasn't anything wrong about wanting to see him, was there? You don't think so.

On some days, Will tells you his day at Mike's. He tells you that Mike asks about you, that he's worried. You tell Will to tell him that you're fine and that he doesn't need to worry. Those are the days where you see Will trying to hide a small smile like he knows something you don't. *Does* he?

Finally, Hop lets you go out again once he sees that the 'coast is clear'. Then he makes you double-promise to not use your powers, if you do, you're not going to get anymore Eggos for a month. A month! The loss is too great so you vow to yourself to not use your powers.. Even if your friends are in trouble.. What would you do?

Luckily, your past hangouts with them weren't dangerous or didn't the use of your powers. You just try to be rea-son-a-ble with them

and tell them to stay out of trouble.

It's a D&D night on Sunday, you go with Will. Mrs. Wheeler welcomes you again, greeting you with that big smile of hers. She's really kind. You see Mr. Wheeler on the armchair again, is he always on that? He seems to be busy watching TV. You also see a tiny girl at the dining table, she looks cute and has blonde hair. Mike's sister maybe? You could ask later.

You go downstairs again. The *basement* as Will called it, he was also pretty confused when you asked if there was a downstairs to the downstairs all the time. The whole 'party' is there, including Max. She doesn't play D&D but she likes to 'see the nerds at work' as Will said. You'd also like to see them play. You're obviously too confused about D&D to play.

"Hey, El!" Max notices you first and the others look at you, you suddenly feel like a deer in the headlights. A phrase Hop told you. The boys greet you as well.

You take a chair and sit next to Max. The game starts.

"Hey." She greets you.

"Hi." You greet her back.

Suddenly the boys start arguing, their voices loud. Will just turns to look at you, rolling his eyes. You hold in a laugh. "Are they always

like this?" You look at Max, she's smirking.

"Those guys? Always. It's so lame." Max laughs, "They seriously have no life at all but at least they have good taste in arcade games." Hmmm. "Mad Max." You remember that's what the boys call her when it comes to anything related to arcade games.

But Max doesn't really seem that Mad. She's laughing right now. You don't know why they'd ever call her Mad Max in the first place.

"Why don't you play?" You ask her. Her face looks *disgusted*.

"Bleh. No thanks. I'm fine being the only not-nerd girl in the party." It's funny how she can sound serious yet funny at the same time.

You look back to watch the boys play. It's interesting to see them make these choices and it's interesting to listen to the story Mike made up. Will told you that as Dungeon Master, Mike was the one who made the quests, the battles, the story and everything else in the game. He's creative.

"Will, no! You'll fucking die and we're going to be screwed!" Dustin yells. You can't see Will's face but he looks like he's thinking. Lucas whispers something to him but he swats the other boy away. Dustin joins in this whispering. Mike just looks like he's given up on them and starts to shout but suddenly the basement door opens.

"Mike! Did you take my Science book *again?!'*" An unfamiliar voice

shouts, it sounds girlish though.

“No? I didn’t!” Mike shouts back, annoyed.

“I swear to God, Mike!” Then the door shuts close again. The party goes back to playing.

“Who was that?” You ask Max. She sounded mad.

“Nancy. Mike’s older sister. I’m guessing you haven’t met her.” Max replies. Nancy. You’ve heard that name before. From Jonathan. Hmm. “She’s actually pretty cool, I’ve hung out with her a couple of times. But she’s too girly for my taste.”

You tip your head, “You don’t like girly?” Max takes a while to think about this. You realize she isn’t too girly when you look back on past events. She doesn’t wear anything that girls usually wear like dresses or skirts. Even the skateboard. Girls don’t use skateboards here, not from what you’ve seen.

“I’m more of.. Boyish. You know?” She looks at you like she’s expecting you to ask what ‘boyish’ means. *Boyish*. Of, like or character-is-tic of a male child or young man. She *is* boyish, you observed. She’s not like the other girls you’ve seen. You wonder why.

“I know.” You instead reply and Max looks relieved.

“You’re a cool gal, El.” She smiles at you then she holds up her fist. You look at it then you look at her, confused. “Oh, um, here, you just bump your fist with mine.” You bring up your fist and bump it with hers. She looks at you, beaming. Just like what Hop does when you do something he’s proud of.

“And that, my dear El Hopper. Is what you call a fist bump. You’re welcome.” On this day, you decide that Max isn’t just Mad but she’s Mad Cool.

Notes for the Chapter:

i live for el and max. also i apologize for the lack of updates! (probably because im so fucking busy with school and exams are like fucking tomorrow and im stressed as hell)

well anyways, i hope youre having a grand day wherever you are!

9. lol bye

no this is not a chapter and yes i am saying 'lol bye'. story's over/
finished/discontinued/any other word related to the first three.